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United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2366 (2017), by which the Council established the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia and requested me to report on its activities every 90 days. The Security Council took note of my request, on an exceptional basis, to change the submission date of this report to align its time frame with the concluding period of the current administration in Colombia. The report covers the period from 27 March to 20 July 2018.

II. Major developments

Presidential elections

2. The period under review was largely dominated by the electoral process. The first and second rounds of presidential elections were held on 27 May and 17 June and, just like the March 2018 legislative elections, they were the most peaceful and inclusive in decades. Iván Duque, of the right-of-centre Centro Democrático political party, in coalition with other parties, won the second round of the elections with over 10 million votes, the largest number ever received by a presidential candidate. He will be sworn in on 7 August. Colombia will also have, for the first time, a woman as Vice-President, Marta Lucía Ramírez. Gustavo Petro came in second with over 8 million votes, the largest number of votes ever cast for a presidential candidate running on a left-of-centre agenda. Under the Statute on Political Opposition adopted in 2018 as part of the peace-related legislation, Gustavo Petro is entitled to a seat in the Senate as the runner-up in the presidential election. His running mate, Ángela María Robledo, will take up a seat in the Chamber of Representatives. Only a year after the end of the conflict between the State and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP), Colombian politics are undoubtedly changing.

3. At the same time, the weeks following the elections witnessed an upsurge in killings of social leaders. The violence was met with widespread repudiation throughout Colombian society, and demonstrations were held in more than 50 cities both in Colombia and abroad. The President, Juan Manuel Santos, called for a national pact against this form of violence; the pact has been signed by both the President and President-elect Duque, key State institutions and political parties. The President

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called a special meeting of the National Commission on Security Guarantees that included the participation of several civil society organizations outside the Commission. Among decisions adopted at the meeting was the establishment of special protection measures for social leaders supporting opposition parties active in the country's interior. The increase in the number of killings confirms the urgency of dealing with the pattern of violence that continues to affect principally the rural areas. The new Government will have to put this issue at the centre of its agenda, and the judicial system will have to redouble efforts to bring perpetrators to account.

4. In his acceptance speech, President-elect Duque stated that his intention was to unite the country and "turn the page on polarization". Regarding the peace process, he reaffirmed statements made during his campaign that his Government would not challenge the bulk of the Peace Agreement, but would seek "corrections" through a national agreement. The nature of those modifications is the subject of an intense debate, particularly with regard to transitional justice.

5. Following the presidential election, I welcomed President-elect Duque's intention to work towards healing the divisions between Colombians and reiterated the strong commitment of the United Nations to accompany Colombia in consolidating the hard-won gains of peace and in achieving reconciliation after so many years of conflict. At a meeting with my Special Representative shortly after the election, the President-elect expressed his intention to work with the United Nations, including the Mission, towards that end.

Legislative developments

6. The current Congress concluded its regular session on 20 June, and an extraordinary session, called to approve pending peace-related measures, ended on 3 July. On 28 June, Congress approved the rules of procedure for the Special Jurisdiction for Peace which will enable the institution to start operating more effectively. Two amendments were included: a restriction of the role of the Special Jurisdiction in extradition processes, and an option for military and police to have their cases put on hold until the establishment of a special chamber to deal with those cases. The Government has expressed its intention to request constitutional review of those provisions.

7. Congress also approved legislation to encourage criminal organizations and illegal armed groups to subject themselves collectively to regular justice and to authorize the holding of a referendum on measures to address corruption. On 18 June, the Government announced that the referendum would be held on 26 August, giving citizens the opportunity to vote on proposals regarding the management of public resources.

Constitutional Court review

8. The Constitutional Court continued its review of peace-related legislation approved under fast-track procedures. It upheld the constitutionality of Legislative Act No. 3, by which 10 seats were created for the political party People's Alternative Revolutionary Force (FARC) in the Congress; Legislative Act No. 4 on the use of royalties from natural resource extraction to finance post-conflict projects; the Statute on Political Opposition, which grants greater guarantees to the political opposition; Decree Law 902 to create a land fund for farmers, including ethnic communities and victims, and other measures to improve access to land; Decree Law 706 on special treatment for members of public security forces under the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition; and Law 1865, which modifies the structure of the National Protection Unit to include former FARC-EP members as close protection officers. The Court also upheld Decree Law 700, which allows filing

a writ of *habeas corpus* in cases of undue deprivation of liberty; Decree 589, which created the Unit for the Search for Disappeared Persons; and Decree Law 775, which regulates a technical and specialized defence system for members of the public security forces. Although the Court has reviewed 92 per cent of the peace-related legislation approved under fast-track procedures, critical measures such as the statute on the Special Jurisdiction for Peace are still pending.

Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition

9. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has received its first referrals of cases from the Supreme Court and information from the Office of the Attorney General, the National Centre for Historical Memory and civil society organizations. It has begun selecting and prioritizing cases. To date, 4,653 members of FARC-EP and 2,159 members of the military and police have signed commitments to come under the jurisdiction of the new institution. On 10 July the Special Jurisdiction conducted its first public hearing, of a Major General of the Colombian Armed Forces accused of crimes committed during the conflict. He appeared voluntarily before the Special Jurisdiction and committed himself to full disclosure of the truth. Another public hearing, focused on cases of kidnapping by FARC-EP, was held on 13 July, with the participation or legal representation of 31 members of the former General Staff, 6 of whom were among the 10 FARC party members expected to hold a seat in the incoming Congress under the terms of the Peace Agreement. During this reporting period, the Special Jurisdiction has rejected the applications of people accused of drug trafficking who were seeking benefits from the transitional justice provisions.

10. In another important step, on 29 June, FARC leader Rodrigo Londoño and the majority of the FARC members who will be taking up seats in the Congress appeared before the Truth Commission to begin the process of accepting responsibility, clarifying the truth and acknowledging victims. During this first session, senior FARC members and the Truth Commission defined an agenda to take the process forward.

Substitution of illicit crops

11. The fight against illicit drugs has gained increasing relevance as the pattern of violence in the rural areas increasingly overlaps with the map of illegal economies. Under the National Comprehensive Programme for the Substitution of Illicit Crops established in May 2017, 77,659 families have signed voluntary substitution agreements committing them to eradicate around 45,000 ha of coca. So far, about 15,000 ha have been eradicated, as verified by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Twenty-nine technical agreements between UNODC and local farmer organizations have been signed as at 12 July, and will benefit 29,523 families. Fifty-four former FARC-EP members participate in the coca substitution programme, focusing on relations with communities. Despite these efforts, estimates of coca cultivation continue to rise. It is disconcerting that some community leaders who are participants in the voluntary programme have been killed or subjected to threats from drug traffickers. Families have also complained of a lack of resources dedicated to the programme and delays in the provision of complementary community and regional investments intended to improve infrastructure and address rural poverty. These challenges weaken the sustainability of the substitution agreements reached with local communities.

12. The increasing figures relating to coca cultivation, the proliferation of armed groups vying for control of these areas, the continuing violence to which coca-growing communities are subjected, and the spread of drug addiction, including in rural communities, point to the importance of combating the drug trade as an integral part of the effort to advance peace, development and the rule of law in the former conflict areas. As demonstrated by the experience of the past couple of years,

communities themselves and their organizations can spearhead this effort, but more sustainable and better coordinated efforts by State institutions to provide security, infrastructure, land and economic alternatives are a prerequisite for success. A national agreement across political parties and social organizations would be a significant factor for success.

Negotiations between the Government of Colombia and the National Liberation Army

13. The fifth round of talks between the Government of Colombia and the National Liberation Army (ELN), which had begun on 15 March, was extended until 15 June. In a joint statement issued on 18 May, by which they announced the formal installation of a technical committee tasked with the design of a new ceasefire agreement, the parties expressed their intention of keeping informed the Episcopal Conference of Colombia and the United Nations Verification Mission of any progress. The sixth cycle of the talks was launched on 2 July and is currently under way. The two key items on the agenda continue to be the achievement of an improved ceasefire agreement and the design of community-based participation in the peace process.

III. Mission tasks

14. The Government, FARC and the Mission identified a series of steps to advance the implementation of the reintegration of FARC members and the security guarantees for communities, organizations and leaders in areas most affected by conflict. Some progress was achieved amid persistent challenges. There are lessons to be learned from this process that should help the incoming Government as it takes on responsibility for the consolidation of the peace process, in particular, the tasks under verification.

A. Socioeconomic reintegration

Landownership and productive projects

15. I put special emphasis in my last report on the importance of translating a number of legal and technical measures adopted during the previous period into actual income-generating opportunities. On 4 May, the President issued a landmark decree enabling access to landownership for former combatants organized in cooperatives. On 7 June, the National Reintegration Council decided to initiate the purchase of land for six productive projects it had already approved. In San José del Guaviare, the first plot of land is expected to be purchased before the end of the month. Another modality has been identified by the Government and FARC that would allow for the inclusion of a land purchase component in projects presented before the National Reintegration Council for approval and funding.

16. Measures taken to ensure land access are encouraging. However, following months of efforts so far only about 400 ha are in the process of being allocated to former combatants. While the path to the acquisition of land for former combatants has now been designed, it will be the next Government's responsibility to make it widely and promptly available to former combatants in the territorial areas for training and reintegration and other settlements.

17. Similarly, there is partial progress in implementing the decree on cooperatives. Seventy cooperatives of former FARC-EP members have been established but only eight of them are fully legalized and are able to operate. This is another step in ensuring the viability and sustainability of productive activities.

18. Regarding productive projects, which so far have been mostly self-funded by former FARC-EP combatants, the initial goal of the National Reintegration Council was to have one project approved and funded in each of the territorial areas for training and reintegration. So far eight projects have been approved with the technical assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Government funds have been disbursed for three of them. Ten additional projects could be approved by the end of July and 11 more are being formulated with the support of national agencies. Notwithstanding these efforts, the fundamental goal of providing income-generating opportunities for 14,000 former combatants is far from being realized. In the interim, the Government has made the welcome decision to extend food assistance to the territorial areas for training and reintegration until the end of 2018.

19. The assistance of the international community in supporting productive initiatives has proved significant. A special fund has been established to co-finance productive projects under the responsibility of the National Reintegration Council. Various projects have received support from the United Nations system (UNDP, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Mine Action Service, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the World Food Programme (WFP)) and funding from the United Nations Multi-Partner Trust Fund. One project recently launched by WFP purchases produce from several territorial areas for training and reintegration to feed children as part of its school feeding programme. To help existing small-scale and self-funded initiatives of former combatants, the Mission and UNDP have been working alongside the Government and FARC to support 37 existing projects in 25 territorial areas and 12 new settlements, 5 of which are led by women.

20. Private companies and foundations are also making increasing contributions to the reintegration process. In the Department of Cauca, a multinational company specializing in high-quality coffee will now have among its suppliers 650 former combatants across the territorial areas for training and reintegration of Cauca. Similar initiatives have been taken by Colombian private foundations.

21. The working group on gender of the National Reintegration Council has been increasingly active in including a gender-sensitive approach to economic reintegration, with support from UNDP, UN-Women and the Mission. Challenges remain, including the availability of childcare, among other measures to enable the active and meaningful participation of women in productive projects.

Departmental working groups on reintegration

22. An encouraging development is the establishment in recent months of reintegration committees at the departmental level, which coordinate resources for technical assistance, health, education and gender, among others. These departmental initiatives — six so far — have helped to embed reintegration efforts in local realities and made departmental resources and expertise available for reintegration.

Lessons learned

23. Some of the lessons learned from what has been a complex and difficult process of reintegration were drawn on the occasion of a forum of governors organized by the Minister of the Interior, the High Commissioner for Peace and the Mission in June. Its four conclusions pointed to (a) the need to understand the reintegration of former combatants as part of a broader process of community development and reconciliation in the regions where reintegration is taking place; (b) the need for vigorous decentralization of the reintegration process, in particular the National Reintegration

Council, so as to bring expertise and resources closer to the social and economic dynamics of the regions; (c) the need to ensure a closer relationship with the private sector, which has shown interest and capacity to support productive projects by former combatants; and (d) the usefulness of connecting international assistance more directly to regional initiatives.

24. The relevance of closely linking reintegration activities with local development has increased as a result of the shifting geography of reintegration. Today, while around 4,000 former FARC-EP members remain in and around the territorial areas for training and reintegration, over 2,000 have moved to several dozen new regrouping points, and thousands more are broadly dispersed throughout the country, including in major cities. Under the circumstances, long-term reintegration, both collective and individual, will be a function of available economic opportunities at the local and departmental levels.

25. Consistent with these lessons, the long-awaited strategy for the long-term reintegration of former combatants was agreed between the Government and FARC, and adopted as a public policy document on 5 July. Covering an eight-year period until 2026, its cost is estimated at $220 million. It calls for enhanced coordination between actors involved in reintegration, merging of reintegration with local development actions aimed at strengthening the social fabric of communities, a focus on sustainable economic futures for the former combatants and their families, and access to health, education and social services. The strategy provides the new Government with an agreed policy framework that should improve the prospect of effective long-term reintegration.

B. Political reintegration

26. In accordance with Legislative Act No. 3, on FARC political participation, on 20 July 10 FARC representatives, 2 of whom are women, are to take their seats in Congress — 5 seats in the Senate and 5 in the Chamber of Representatives. The President-elect has stated that, while he did not oppose the assignment of 10 seats to the FARC party, he objected to those FARC members accused of war crimes or crimes against humanity taking up FARC seats in Congress before having served sentences handed down by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace. He has indicated his intention to seek a national consensus on this matter.

C. Legal guarantees

27. The Government has worked to complete its review of former FARC-EP members and accredit and notify as many as possible prior to the end of the current administration. It has made significant progress during this period. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace and its Chamber on Amnesty provide a process for taking up unresolved issues relating to legal guarantees for former FARC-EP members as set out in the Peace Agreement.

28. As mentioned in earlier reports, FARC-EP had on 15 August 2017 submitted a list of 14,178 individuals it identified as its former members, prompting a process of review and certification of those names by the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace. In this reporting period, the increasing dispersion of former FARC-EP members required more proactive efforts to locate and inform individuals of their accreditation, to ensure that they are incorporated into broader reintegration benefits and processes. The Office of the High Commissioner, FARC and the Mission jointly supported visits to several departments for this purpose. As at mid-July, the total number of former FARC-EP members accredited by the Office of the High

Commissioner is around 13,000 and 12,623 of those individuals have been notified and provided with their accreditation. The Office of the High Commissioner is open to continuing with the accreditation process.

29. FARC has indicated that it is consolidating a list of approximately 1,000 former FARC-EP members who, for various reasons, it was not able to include in the original list submitted in August 2017. The Government has agreed to review the names for their inclusion in a special individual route for reintegration, the details of which are under consideration.

30. At the time of the signing of the Peace Agreement in November 2016, there were around 3,500 former FARC-EP members identified in prison, approximately 8 per cent of them women. By the end of June, 208 accredited members remain in prison, 3 per cent of whom are women. The Special Jurisdiction for Peace has agreed to prioritize the review of whether to grant conditional liberty to accredited former FARC-EP members still in prison, pending determination of their legal status. An additional 230 people, designated as "peace advocates", were previously given temporary conditional liberty and, on 17 April, the President extended those benefits until their legal status is resolved. There are 313 more individuals included in the FARC-EP list, most of whom are in prison, whose potential accreditation by the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace remains under review.

31. The Peace Agreement calls for the provision of legal aid and support for individuals who will come under the different components of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-Repetition. On 11 July, the Decree on the creation of the Independent System for Advice and Defence was approved.

32. On 9 April, Seuxis Pausias Hernández Solarte, alias Jesus Santrich, one of the FARC leaders put forward to take a seat in Congress, was arrested for extradition pursuant to an INTERPOL Red Notice. A formal request for his extradition was presented by the United States of America on 6 June. Under the Constitution, the Special Jurisdiction for Peace is competent to review extradition requests for those under its jurisdiction in order to determine whether the alleged conduct occurred after the signing of the Peace Agreement, in which case Mr. Hernandez could be subject to extradition. The Special Jurisdiction has 120 days to make a determination.

33. The detention of Mr. Hernández has caused considerable alarm among FARC members, particularly those in the territorial areas for training and reintegration. They are sceptical of the allegations and concerned that any other FARC member could be similarly charged. This case compounds the former FARC-EP members' widespread sense of legal uncertainty that results from the continuing controversy over the transitional justice system.

D. Security guarantees

Tripartite coordination for protection and security

34. The Tripartite Protection and Security Mechanism continues to be the main mechanism for coordination between the National Protection Unit, the national police and the Mission, with the accompaniment of the armed forces. It provides for the security of former FARC-EP members and serves to build trust between the parties. During this period, the Mechanism successfully coordinated security measures during the two rounds of the presidential elections, during which there were no security incidents. During the past three months, the Mechanism has expanded and local mechanisms have now been established in 14 regions and 22 territorial areas for training and reintegration. Within the Mechanism, the National Protection Unit, with

the support of the Mission, is drafting a manual on the specific risks faced by female FARC members.

35. The Tripartite Protection and Security Mechanism and the Specialized Directorate of the National Protection Unit have proved to be valuable tools that need to be strengthened by enhancing their capacity to assess risks and design security measures, particularly for former FARC-EP members who have relocated to new settlements.

Security deployment around territorial areas

36. Public security forces continue to provide security to territorial areas for training and reintegration and, in many cases, have maintained cooperative relationships with the former combatants. It was generally expected that the presence of security forces would have a broad deterrent impact on violence in the surrounding areas. However, as discussed in paragraph 40 below, in five of the territorial areas and surrounding areas the security situation has deteriorated and assassinations and armed attacks on former combatants and local inhabitants have taken place close to the territorial areas and in nearby communities. These cases highlight the need for a more proactive presence of public security forces in areas vulnerable to armed groups.

37. As previously mentioned, FARC members are increasingly spread across new settlements without a clear legal framework for the deployment of security forces. Some settlements are in urban settings, which require a distinct approach. There has been some coordination between the inhabitants of new settlements and the security forces, but this coordination needs to be formalized and consistent.

Close protection

38. Close protection has been a key element of the security measures implemented for former FARC-EP members. The National Protection Unit has established 136 close protection details for potentially high-risk individuals and former combatants in the territorial areas for training and reintegration. Training and recruitment of additional bodyguards is required to meet the full complement of 1,200 set out in the Peace Agreement. To that effect, an additional 181 were contracted in this period with 102 more required. Prior to the Peace Agreement, there were no women serving as bodyguards in the National Protection Unit. Today, there are 128 women in the Unit, 46 of whom were recruited during this period.

Security of former FARC-EP members outside the territorial areas for training and reintegration

39. Outside the security mechanisms provided by the public security forces and the National Protection Unit, 51 former FARC-EP members have been killed and 5 others were victims of forced disappearance since August 2017. During this reporting period, 22 former FARC-EP members and 2 relatives were killed. Since January 2018, the Special Investigation Unit of the Attorney General's Office has devoted the bulk of its efforts to the investigation of those cases. As a result of its investigation of 29 cases, the Unit has succeeded in establishing a variety of motives behind the killings and, in 40 per cent of the cases, it has been able to identify the material or intellectual authors or both. Regarding one of the most emblematic cases, the killing of two former FARC-EP members in Peque, Antioquia, in January, the Unit arrested two material authors and one intellectual author of the crime, all members of the Clan de Golfo illegal armed group.

40. On 9 and 10 July, the FARC leadership convened a meeting of representatives from all territorial areas for training and reintegration and new regrouping points, with the participation of the Minister of the Interior, the Tripartite Protection and

Security Mechanism, the security forces and the National Reintegration Agency, to discuss the security challenges to former combatants. The greatest threats identified by former combatants related to drug trafficking. The five territorial areas for training and reintegration with major security threats are precisely those located in historic drug trafficking corridors. The deteriorating security dynamics of the territories coincide with the proliferation of illegal armed groups, recidivist groups and the co-optation of some local civilian and military personnel by drug traffickers. High levels of insecurity due to the slow progress of productive projects in the territorial areas for training and reintegration and new regrouping points are also a factor. It was agreed to develop prevention plans in the territories and security protocols for the protection of communities and leaders, to coordinate the activities of the close protection teams, and to insist upon progress on productive projects.

Security of communities, organizations and leaders in the areas most affected by the conflict

41. Like most Colombians, I remain gravely concerned at the continuing killings of community leaders and human rights defenders, a problem that spiked in the days following the presidential elections. In a recent statement, the Attorney General has pointed out that the increase in homicides concerns not only leaders but community members as well, as part of a broader increase in violence in many rural areas. Confirming this trend, during the reporting period, 70 per cent of the early warnings issued by the Office of the Ombudsman concerned the imminent risk faced by communities and social and ethnic leaders in relation to land restitution, substitution of illegal crops, and continuous recruitment of children. In addition, the Ombudsman has emphasized the ongoing risks relating to sexual violence in several departments.

42. Undoubtedly this trend continues to be related to actors seeking to control communities, land and resources, particularly in the areas formerly under FARC-EP influence. In some regions, such as the Department of Nariño and Catatumbo in Norte de Santander Department, this situation has resulted in levels of violence not seen since the end of the conflict. For instance, on 3 July, seven persons were killed in Argelia, Cauca, located on a strategic drug trafficking route.

43. The Peace Agreement contemplated an array of tools to address the situation in areas most affected by the conflict. Those included the establishment of the Elite Corps of the national police, to operate in the former conflict areas; the strengthening of the Attorney General's Office through the creation of the Special Investigation Unit dedicated to the dismantling of criminal organizations; the strengthening of the early warning system of the Ombudsman's Office and the response from the State agencies; the programme to substitute illicit crops; the national programme for the protection of communities, their organizations and leaders; legislation setting out a process for criminal and illegal armed organizations to subject themselves to regular justice, and the promotion of national reconciliation through the National Council for Peace and Reconciliation. The Government's Plan Horus has been in place since the end of 2017 and aims at deploying the security forces in the most vulnerable municipalities. All these measures are at different levels of implementation. Collectively, however, they clearly have not yet produced the desired impact. To some extent, the challenge has become even greater. The broad endorsement that followed the urgent call by President Santos for a national pact against violence is an indication of the magnitude of the challenge. The Mission has continued to follow and support the implementation of these measures.

Early warning system and institutional response

44. With regard to the early warning system, the Mission has followed up on 27 new early warnings in 49 municipalities. Some progress was made by the Intersectoral

Commission for Rapid Response to Early Warnings in coordinating institutional efforts to act on early warnings. However, its effectiveness will require more willingness on the part of regional and local authorities to assume responsibility, and more solution-oriented, measurable and articulated recommendations.

Attorney General's Office and the Special Investigation Unit

45. In response to the attacks against social leaders and human rights defenders, the Attorney General's Office has adopted strategic guidelines and elevated the priority given to these cases by several of its prosecution units, including the Special Investigation Unit. According to the latest figures of the Attorney General's Office, of 184 cases since January 2016, there has been progress with relation to 89 cases in which 57 material and 32 intellectual authors were identified.

46. For its part, as from April 2018 the Special Investigation Unit has responsibility for 71 cases of attacks against social leaders and human rights defenders in the 5 departments of Antioquia, Córdoba, Meta, Valle del Cauca and Cauca.

Comprehensive programme for the security and protection of communities, organizations, social leaders and human rights defenders

47. The programme of collective measures for communities was approved by presidential decree on 18 April after extensive consultations with a wide array of civil society organizations. It is designed to be a key element of the national public policy on prevention and protection of communities. The Mission is discussing implementation and verification priorities with institutions and civil society organizations.

Programme for reconciliation, coexistence and prevention of stigmatization

48. The programme, provided for in the Peace Agreement among the security guarantees for the communities in the zone of conflict, has been led since 2017 by the National Council for Peace and Reconciliation. To date, the Council has formally named 105 members, 70 of them representing 36 sectors of Colombian civil society (44 per cent are women), and 35 representing public institutions including the executive and legislative branches (50 per cent are women). In November 2017, President Santos announced its work plan highlighting three key aspects: (a) territorial councils for peace, reconciliation and coexistence; (b) public policy for reconciliation, coexistence and non-stigmatization; and (c) civic education for peace.

49. To date, the Council has held five regional meetings with high levels of participation from women, youth, ethnic and religious organizations, victims' organizations, former FARC-EP members, farmers and business associations. The Mission will support the activities of this important mechanism for dialogue across diverse sectors of Colombian society.

National Commission on Security Guarantees

50. The National Commission on Security Guarantees has focused on drawing up an action plan to tackle and dismantle criminal organizations and criminal activities. It has provided a platform for dialogue and confidence-building between civil society and State actors. Its technical subcommission has held 11 regional sessions to strengthen its links at the departmental and local levels. At the most recent session, on 10 July, dedicated to developing new measures to address the killings of social leaders and human rights defenders, civil society participants presented recommendations to improve the Commission's operations and unanimously stressed the value of its continuation under the incoming Government.

Lessons learned

51. With regard to most of the instruments discussed above, there is every reason to stay the course. The early warnings from the Ombudsman's Office have by and large proved accurate, constituting a tool for prevention, and with time and political leadership institutions should be able to respond more effectively. Among State institutions, the Attorney General's Office has been leading in the analysis of the challenges resulting from the absence of the State in the zones of conflict, and its investigations appear to be homing in on the authors of the violence and the structures behind them. The National Council for Peace and Reconciliation and its territorial councils offer a platform for dialogue among sectors of Colombian society on major challenges confronting the country.

52. One of the main shortcomings of the implementation process has been the lack of integration between the various strands of State action in the rural areas. Prioritization, sequencing and geographical focus could maximize the impact of limited resources on the security and welfare of communities. As mentioned in my previous report, the deployment of public security forces has not been combined sufficiently with the provision of goods and services through the civilian presence of the State; nor has the coca substitution programme been combined with other tools of State influence.

Comprehensive community-based prevention and protection strategies

53. Precisely to address the need for integration between State services at the community level, during this period the Ministry of the Interior together with the Mission identified four regions as "pilots" for initial implementation of a comprehensive approach to the prevention and protection of communities, in Guapi (Cauca), Tumaco (Nariño), San José de Urré (Córdoba) and El Tarra (Norte de Santander). Civil society, including ethnic and community-based organizations, put forward a variety of innovative proposals, often inexpensive, for their security and protection. The initiative illustrates the value of dialogue with communities, and the need for a nimble and coordinated response from State institutions. The Mission will follow up and support closely these initiatives.

E. Cross-cutting issues

Gender mainstreaming and engagement with women's groups

54. In my previous report I stressed some deficits regarding the inclusion of gender-specific measures in both the reintegration of former combatants and security guarantees for communities. Tangible efforts have been made in this respect during the reporting period.

55. As stated earlier, the working group on gender of the National Reintegration Council is playing an increasingly active role in promoting a gender perspective in the design and implementation of productive projects. The working group proposed 16 gender-specific actions in the recently approved eight-year reintegration policy. In parallel, the Mission, jointly with UN-Women, established a high-level forum to mobilize international action and resources in support of the economic activities of former FARC-EP women and broader inclusion of gender dimensions.

56. Regarding security guarantees, the national police launched a project to increase gender sensitization and the response to gender-based violence in seven regions, and the Ministry of Defence has developed its first policy on gender mainstreaming for the defence sector, including for military personnel deployed to territorial areas for training and reintegration and communities. On behalf of the Tripartite Protection and

Security Mechanism, the National Protection Unit, the Mission and UN-Women are preparing a guidebook on self-protection for female former FARC-EP members. The third and final training course for close protection teams initiated in June includes training on gender-specific protection and, as a result of proactive recruitment measures, the course includes 75 women participants, 46 of whom passed initial screening, a 56 per cent increase in the number of women bodyguards in the National Protection Unit. Finally, on 15 June the Minister of the Interior launched the Comprehensive Programme on Guarantees for Women Human Rights Defenders and Leaders. This initiative, if duly financed, could provide an effective complement to the implementation of Decree 660 (2018), on collective protection measures for communities.

57. The Mission and UN-Women continue to maintain regular dialogue with women's organizations at national and regional levels and with a network of Mission and FARC focal points on gender across the 24 territorial areas for training and reintegration. From 14 to 16 July, the FARC Gender Committee and the Mission held a retreat with over 88 gender focal points from all territorial areas and regions, which offered practical tools to ensure inclusion of women and a gender-sensitive approach in economic activities and in self-protection mechanisms, particularly for women in leadership roles.

Ethnic perspectives

58. Modest progress has been made in the integration of ethnic perspectives into the reintegration process. Indigenous organizations have prepared a draft decree setting out procedures for the reintegration of indigenous former FARC-EP members. The draft decree is under review by the National Reintegration Agency. The Agency has budgeted funds for the preparation of a comparable process for the reintegration of Afro-Colombian former combatants; a decision has not yet been taken on whether to include both of these processes in one decree.

59. Regarding the integration of ethnic aspects into the provision of security guarantees for former combatants and communities, there are few advances. This is of particular concern because a significant portion of the social and community leaders killed thus far in 2018 were members of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities. Early warnings issued by the Office of the Ombudsman point out that the use of ethnic territories for drug trafficking, illegal mining and other exploitation of natural resources has endangered leaders and, in some cases, led to displacement of communities. Inclusion of ethnic considerations in comprehensive security policies is needed.

60. The High-level Forum of Ethnic Peoples established under the Peace Agreement has not been able to convene regularly and lacks resources.

Child protection

61. The Mission continued liaising with the Presidential Counsellor for Human Rights on the cases of 26 children included in the reintegration programme "A Different Path of Life". The Mission observed advances in most cases and continues to closely monitor three cases in Cesar, Antioquia and Chocó, which showed no progress. Through this programme, a total of 110 children have been recognized as victims (although 16 have not yet been notified), 50 have already received monetary compensation and 44 are still awaiting compensation. As at the end of June, 93 participants in the programme had turned 18 and 76 of them are now successfully incorporated into and receiving their entitlements under the adult reintegration programme, including a one-time reintegration allowance and monthly stipends. Five additional cases are in this transition process and 12 are still under protection

measures by the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), IOM and their non-governmental organization partners are providing psycho-social support and leadership training to support the reintegration of these children.

62. The reintegration programme for children requires a clearer legal status to ensure its proper resourcing and sustainability as well as a stronger accountability framework. Indeed, some children have waited long periods to receive information or to access their benefits, causing emotional distress and shortfalls in resources for their daily subsistence. Material support to families must be granted, especially since at least 49 of the families of these children live in conditions of extreme poverty. A decree to clarify the process for adolescents who have decided to continue their reintegration process within the territorial areas for training and reintegration is still under preparation and should be issued as soon as possible.

63. Limited progress was made during this period regarding day-care facilities and living conditions of children in territorial areas for training and reintegration, most of whom are children of former combatants. This is despite the efforts to coordinate with the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare. UNICEF is in the process of supporting a day-care facility in Filipinas, Arauca Department, and will also implement the programme "Somos Paz" for reconciliation in Llano Grande, Antioquia. The Mission is liaising with private sector foundations and local governments to provide resources for day-care facilities in other territorial areas for training and reintegration.

Youth, peace and security

64. The Mission has observed that a growing number of young men and women are assuming leadership roles within the territorial areas for training and reintegration, and that youth organizations are taking an increasingly active role at the local and national level in supporting reintegration and reconciliation efforts. The Mission has been strengthening its engagement with these youth leaders and organizations, consistent with resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), and has facilitated contacts and networking between young entrepreneurs, business and civil society leaders and former combatants, specifically regarding reconciliation efforts and support for the former combatants' productive projects. A successful pilot visit of youth leaders to the territorial area Miravalle, where they inaugurated the former combatants' ecotourism project, will be followed by visits to other territorial areas for training and reintegration.

Liaison and coordination

65. The Mission maintained a productive and continuous dialogue with the two parties, high-level Government officials and the Congress, the churches, private sector representatives and civil society. During this electoral cycle, emphasis was placed on proactive dialogue with the presidential candidates and their teams to share views on the peace process and to identify opportunities to enhance peace implementation.

66. Given the growing role played by regional and local authorities and their continuity in office until the end of 2019, the Mission worked to deepen engagement with governors and to foster exchange of innovative practice among them. This includes the aforementioned Forum of Governors held in June with the participation of the Minister of the Interior, the High Commissioner for Peace, the private sector and 13 governors' offices. The Forum highlighted the need for local leadership, visible peace dividends, private sector engagement and reconciliation, and strengthened links between regional and national authorities to mobilize and align resources.

67. The Mission and the United Nations country team continued to work in close coordination across their mandates. The two thematic groups on reintegration and security guarantees met regularly to exchange information and develop joint analysis. On socioeconomic reintegration, UNDP, FAO, WFP and UN-Women are directly supporting economic initiatives of FARC members; IOM and the United Nations Population Fund are promoting sexual and reproductive health in territorial areas for training and reintegration; and UNICEF is supporting reintegration of children, among broader work with children and adolescents. The Mine Action Service has provided training in humanitarian demining to former FARC members and supported the establishment of their own demining non-governmental organization. Activities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in support of local prevention and protection of community activities are complementary to the Mission's focus on verifying and promoting security guarantees.

IV. Mission structures

Mission planning and operations

68. In response to the increased dispersion of former FARC-EP members and their partial movement out of some territorial areas for training and reintegration, the Mission is conducting an analysis and evaluation of its own geographical deployment. The review will ensure that the Mission is able to provide adequate verification in both the territorial areas and in new regrouping points. The adjusted deployment will blend the Mission's existing presence with a "hub and spoke" approach, enabling staff to operate from small hub offices from which teams will cover multiple territorial areas for training and reintegration and/or new regrouping points.

Mission support

69. During this period, the Mission has focused on reallocation of resources in accordance with the movement to a more mobile and responsive hub deployment footprint. This has resulted in the consolidation of six remote camps and the reallocation of resources from nine remote locations to more flexible hubs. All Mission activities including camp and resources reallocation continue to be implemented in full accordance with United Nations environmental standards and policies.

Safety and security

70. The security risk assessment developed for the Mission predicts that residual risk levels in relation to most identified threats (kidnapping, attack by spoilers, crossfire and violent demonstrations) vary between low and medium. From a security management perspective, the activities planned for the Mission were considered viable insofar as the relevant risk management measures were fully implemented. On sporadic occasions and in specific areas affected by armed confrontations such as the Catatumbo region, missions were temporarily suspended as a risk reduction strategy. United Nations activities have also been restricted because of flooding and landslide hazards in the area affected by the Hidroituango dam crisis.

Conduct and discipline

71. The Mission continues round-table discussions at headquarters and in the field offices on prevention of sexual harassment, other forms of harassment, and abuse of authority. The Mission also took an active part in a United Nations country team task

force on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, co-chaired by UN-Women and UNHCR.

72. There are no pending conduct and discipline cases in the Mission.

V. Observations

73. The present report coincides with the culmination of one phase of the peace process in Colombia, and the beginning of a new one, with the inauguration of the new Congress this week, and the swearing-in of the new President on 7 August. Both were elected, as commented by all observers, through the least violent and most participatory elections in decades. The transition of the former FARC-EP from war to politics was undoubtedly a key factor in this outcome, which is among the most tangible benefits of the peace process for society at large. My observations in this report will focus on several broad issues that emerge from the experience of the past couple of years and are meant to help to inform the vision of those responsible for bringing the peace process to completion.

74. The two main actors behind this achievement are President Juan Manuel Santos and the leadership of FARC. Amid the challenges of peace implementation, both parties have recognized each other's merits: President Santos has stressed that FARC had complied with its central commitment of laying down its weapons and embracing peaceful politics, while the FARC leadership continues to recognize that President Santos faced the daunting task of implementing a very ambitious agreement with unquestionable political will. As a participant in this process, I subscribe to both statements and, as a witness to many ongoing conflicts in the world, I thank them for their leadership.

75. The task ahead is to consolidate the peace. Violence in the zones of conflict, including against social leaders and human rights defenders, the proliferation of illegal groups and the growth of the coca economy, as well as frustration and fears among former combatants and among communities who feel bypassed by the peace process, leave no doubt as to the magnitude of the challenges that await the new Government, Colombian institutions and civil society alike. They may not come as a surprise given the long history of conflict in the country, but their deep roots do not take away from the urgency of addressing them. This and prior reports focus on many aspects of the problems at hand, particularly with regard to the reintegration of former combatants and security guarantees for communities.

76. No peace process is exempt from uncertainty, but peace implementation in Colombia has been dogged by levels of uncertainty that have raised deep and understandable misgivings among FARC members reintegrating into society. Between the renegotiation following the plebiscite of October 2016, protracted discussions in Congress on the legislative agenda, the process of review by the Constitutional Court, and now the change in Government, uncertainty continues to surround issues that are at the core of any peace agreement: the legal, political and, ultimately, security guarantees for those who have laid down their weapons and depend on institutions to deliver those guarantees as well as socioeconomic opportunities. In this regard, the country's new authorities have the critical responsibility to restore a sense of confidence about the future among the rank and file, the mid-level commanders and the leadership of the former guerrilla group. It is not only a matter of consolidating the peace process with FARC, it is also a matter of credibility in relation to possible future negotiations with other armed actors. More broadly, it goes to the heart of the principle of the negotiated settlement of armed conflicts, to which the United Nations is deeply committed.

77. The past two years have also demonstrated with utmost clarity that, while the Peace Agreement with FARC-EP has brought about very real change to the country, the peace process with what was the largest guerrilla movement in the country is only part of the broader fundamental task of bringing development and the rule of law to vast expanses of the country that continue to be prey to violence — a violence that thrives on the absence or weakness of institutions, infrastructure and legal economic opportunities for the communities who live in those areas. There is probably no greater challenge for the new national authorities than to bring resources and coherence to a combination of social and economic development, infrastructure, security, counter-narcotics and the rule of law. The Peace Agreement with FARC has made this possible; the country's new leadership has the opportunity to make this a reality.

78. One of the prominent provisions of the Peace Agreement called for a National Political Pact against violence and for the peaceful exercise of politics. In the polarized context of the plebiscite and the elections, the Government doubted whether it could lead it successfully. What seemed difficult became possible and necessary two weeks ago when, setting aside political differences, Colombian society expressed its outrage and repudiation at the spike of killings of social leaders and human rights defenders. A "Pact of repudiation of violence against social leaders" was endorsed by key State institutions and by all major political expressions. The more relevant measures provided in the Peace Agreement specifically to address violence in the zones of conflict are at varying stages of implementation. Taken together, however, they still fall far short. I believe the national political will reflected in the pact of repudiation of violence can make a difference. Political polarization has been only part of the story of the past two years. The deliberations of the National Commission on Security Guarantees, where State institutions and civil society meet, the expanding presence and activities of the National Council for Peace and Reconciliation throughout the country, and the willingness of former combatants, farmers, soldiers, police, entrepreneurs, religious leaders and victims in the rural areas to come together and leave the confrontations of the past behind are all signs that the basis for a broader national consensus, the foundation of national reconciliation, exists. I invite the national authorities, institutions, political forces and civil society to remain committed to that purpose.

79. I also invite the Security Council to maintain its own unanimous commitment to Colombia, which has played a very significant role in bringing the peace process to this point. I am confident that together with the continuing assistance of the United Nations country team and the international community at large, the Mission can support effectively the fulfilment of the daunting tasks that lie ahead.